

IRS News Release

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IRS Announces Streamlined and Simplified Notices to Taxpayers

YouTube Video: [Received a Letter from the IRS?](#)

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today unveiled its first redesigned notices that are part of an on-going effort to improve the way it corresponds with taxpayers.

The nine new notices are among the first to be reviewed and revised for clarity, effectiveness and efficiency. The agency also will create an office that ensures the effort to improve communications is on-going and permanent.

“One of my priorities is to ensure that we have clear and simple communication with taxpayers. In the past, our notices often looked more like legal documents and not an effort to communicate clearly. The differences between the old and new notices are like night and day. They show the potential of our on-going effort in this area,” said IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman.

In July 2008, Shulman appointed the Taxpayer Communications Taskgroup to review IRS correspondence. The task group found that IRS notices have different looks, messages and do not use consistent language. Because of this, some notices are creating unnecessary confusion for taxpayers.

Nine notices will feature the new design format beginning in January. These notices account for approximately 2 million pieces of correspondence with individuals, businesses and exempt organizations.

The new format includes a plain language explanation of the nature of the correspondence, clearly states what action the taxpayer must take and presents a consistent, clean design. The new format also guides taxpayers to appropriate pages on IRS.gov where they can find accurate and relevant information quickly and easily. By reducing the potential for confusion, these notices will improve the taxpayers’ ability to get problems resolved quickly, and improve overall compliance.

Shulman also announced this important work will be made a permanent part of the IRS through a new office to oversee improvements to taxpayer correspondence. The new office, called Office of Taxpayer Correspondence, will be directed by Jodi Patterson, who led the initial effort.

Tax preparers are already seeing some of this effort. In March, the IRS reduced to 2 from 13 the number of inserts included to tax preparers as part of notice CP 161, which is mailed to business taxpayers who underpay their taxes. There are approximately 2.3 million CP 161 notices sent annually.